

WISCONSIN WORKS FOR EVERYONE

DETAILS

OVERVIEW

Wisconsin is a national leader in welfare reform. Since taking office, Governor Scott Walker has built on Governor Tommy Thompson's reforms to make welfare a program that is accountable to the taxpayers and provides Wisconsinites a hand up, not a handout.

Over the last eight years, these reforms have helped reduce fraud in a number of welfare programs, while simultaneously helping thousands of citizens find dignity through work. The FoodShare Employment and Training Program (FSET) alone has helped 25,000 individuals find employment.

WISCONSIN WORKS FOR EVERYONE

In January 2017, Governor Walker [announced](#) "Wisconsin Works for Everyone," a welfare reform package expanding upon initiatives enacted by Governor Tommy Thompson's 1996 Wisconsin Works (W-2) initiative.

Like W-2, this reform package was based on the fundamental principle that work is dignifying and connects individuals to society and its values. It reforms public assistance programs to provide support and services that help individuals establish a healthy lifestyle and find not only jobs but family-supporting careers. And it includes improvements to ensure programs serve as springboards to self-sufficiency, not just mechanisms for alleviating material hardship.

Elements of the Wisconsin Works for Everyone welfare reform plan were included in the [2017-19 Wisconsin State Budget](#), expanding job training programs; eliminating the child benefit cliff for child care subsidies; seeking to extend work requirements to able-bodied adults with school-age children who are receiving FoodShare as well as to able-bodied adults receiving housing assistance; and seeking to expand drug testing requirements for FoodShare participants.

2017-19 SPECIAL SESSION LEGISLATION

During his [State of the State Address](#), Governor Walker called a Special Session of the State Legislature to further address welfare reform as part of his [Ambitious Agenda](#) for 2018. In response, Speaker Robin Vos and Senator Chris Kapenga introduced several welfare reform bills.

On February 20, 2018, nine Wisconsin Works for Everyone welfare reform bills passed the Wisconsin State Legislature. This legislation comprehensively addresses welfare reform through several key initiatives:

1. [Special Session Assembly Bill 1](#): Requires the Department of Health Services (DHS) to set work requirements in the FSET program to the maximum allowed under federal law (Requires federal law change)
2. [Special Session Assembly Bill 2](#): Expands FSET statewide for able-bodied adults with school-aged dependents
3. [Special Session Assembly Bill 3](#): Creates asset restrictions for individuals participating in FoodShare, Wisconsin Works (W-2), and Wisconsin Shares (Requires some federal law change)
4. [Special Session Assembly Bill 4](#): Develops employment plans for individuals in public housing (Requires federal law change)
5. [Special Session Assembly Bill 5](#): Establishes a pilot program for periodic payments of the earned income tax credit (Requires federal approval)
6. [Special Session Assembly Bill 6](#): Requires DHS and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to implement performance-based payment systems for W-2 and FSET contracts
7. [Special Session Assembly Bill 7](#): Creates a Pay for Success contracting program for public benefit programs
8. [Special Session Assembly Bill 8](#): Requires child support compliance for those receiving Medicaid (Requires federal agency approval)
9. [Special Session Assembly Bill 9](#): Allows savings accounts in the Medicaid program (Requires federal agency approval)

Governor Walker signed these bills into law on April 10, 2018, helping people move from government dependence to true independence through the dignity of work.